

LORD MOYNE

M.A., F.R.S.L.

The Guinness Family*

THE ORIGINS of our family are hidden in the mists of a not very remote antiquity. The first Guinness of whom there is an undoubted record is Richard Guinness of Celbridge, county Kildare, who was born about 1690 and was living in Leixlip in 1766. Efforts to trace the origin of the family beyond him have met with no success; conjecture, supported by inconclusive pieces of evidence, has led principally in the direction of the Magennis family of county Down and of the Gennys family of Cornwall.

Richard Guinness of Celbridge is described in legal documents as agent or receiver to Dr. Arthur Price, Archbishop of Cashel. He first married Elizabeth Read of Oughterard, county Kildare, and his eldest son Arthur became a brewer and the ancestor of the brewing side of the family, while his second son Samuel became a gold-beater and the ancestor of the banking side of the family.

The Archbishop died in 1752 and left £100 each to Richard and to the first Arthur. The latter acquired the lease of a small brewery in Leixlip, county Kildare, and soon afterwards, in 1759, the lease of the brewery at St. James's Gate which was to become famous for its stout. The lease, which was for 9,000 years at a rent of £45 a year, describes the premises which covered about an acre of land as "a commodious dwelling house with a large pleasure-garden and fish pond, the brewery with copper kieve and mill, two large Malt houses, stabling for twelve horses with loft to hold 200 loads of hay, and an uninterrupted supply of water free from tax or pipe money." To defend this water supply from interruption by the Dublin Corporation, the first Arthur became involved in litigation, and even, it is said, had to menace the men of the Corporation with a pick-axe; but in 1784 he was granted a lease of the water for 8,975 years.

The first Arthur also built flour mills at Kilmainham outside the city, and is on record as often riding out to visit them when over 70. He was the father of some twenty-one children, not all of whom survived their infancy. He married Olivia Whitmore in 1761. She was the daughter of a Dublin merchant, and it was through her that his descendants became "of Founder's Kin" at Winchester.

Church Connections

Of the first Arthur's many children mention must be made of his eldest son, the Reverend Hosea Guinness, who was first of the many Guinnesses to go into the Church. He was born in 1765 and was for thirty years rector of St. Werburgh's and became Chancellor of St. Patrick's Cathedral. His descendants are the eldest line of the Guinness family. Among them was Miss May Guinness, the distinguished painter, who died in 1955, aged ninety-one. She won the Croix de Guerre for her bravery under bombardment as a nurse at Vadelaincourt, near Verdun, in the first world war. A disciple of André Lhote, she was an accomplished artist with a strongly individual style.

Hosea's youngest son, Francis Hart Vicesimus Guinness, emigrated first to India and then to New Zealand, where a numerous family of his descendants is to be found to-day. His eldest son, Sir Arthur Robert Guinness, became Speaker of the House of Representatives in 1903.

The second son of the first Arthur, usually known as Arthur Guinness of Beaumont, assumed command of the brewing business, in which he was helped by his brothers Benjamin and William Lunell. He was also a director of the Bank of Ireland, and in 1820 became its Governor. As early as 1797, when Ireland was in a most unsettled state, he publicly championed the cause of Catholic Emancipation. None the less, he was later involved in a political dispute

* Reprinted, with kind permission, from a supplement to *The Times*, November 20th, 1959.

with supporters of Daniel O'Connell, from which a temporary boycott resulted, in spite of O'Connell's condemnation of such measures. It is said that the development of the brewery's export market—especially to India—dates from the time of this boycott.

The second Arthur Guinness had three sons by his first wife, Anne Lee. He was succeeded in the direction of the brewery not by his eldest son, the Reverend William Smythe Lee Grattan Guinness, who went into the Church, nor by his second son Arthur Lee Guinness, who was a dilettante, but by his third son, Benjamin Lee Guinness, who had worked in the brewery since the age of sixteen. He became Lord Mayor of Dublin, and restored St. Patrick's Cathedral from a ruinous condition. He was a Member of Parliament for Dublin City from 1865 until his death in 1868.

Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness had three sons. The eldest, who was to become Lord Ardilaun, inherited a partnership in the brewery which he sold in 1876 to his younger brother, Sir Edward Cecil Guinness, later the first Lord Iveagh. Lord Ardilaun, who was M.P. for Dublin from 1868 to 1869 and again from 1874 to 1880, is particularly remembered there for the gift to the city of St. Stephen's Green which he made jointly with his brother Edward.

Racing Motorist

A grandson of Sir Benjamin Lee, through his second son Lee, was Kenelm Lee Guinness, the racing motorist, who invented the K.L.G. sparking plugs for his own use, and successfully organized their manufacture on a larger scale when required to do so during the first world war.

In 1886, ten years after becoming sole owner of the brewery, Edward Cecil Guinness converted the enterprise into a public company. He retained control of the company until his death in 1927. By his marriage to his cousin, Adelaide Guinness, daughter of Richard Samuel Guinness of Deepwell, Blackrock, county Dublin, he brought together the descendants of the first Arthur, the brewing branch of the family, and the descendants of the first Samuel, the banking branch of the family. As there were three other marriages between Guinnesses in the nineteenth century, inter-relationships are complicated.

The descendants of the first Samuel, the gold-beater, were mostly either barristers or bankers. One of his sons, Richard Guinness the barrister, married Mary Darley (an aunt of George Darley the poet) and Richard Samuel Guinness, of Deepwell, was their son. His elder brother, Robert Rundell Guinness, in partnership with John Ross Mahon, founded the merchant bank of Guinness & Mahon in Dublin in 1837, the firm's name being changed subsequently to Guinness, Mahon & Company. The founder's elder son, Richard Seymour Guinness, who is reputed to have been employed by the firm at the age of fifteen, subsequently moved to London in 1874 and opened an office there in 1887. Two of the founder's great-grandsons and also two of his great-great-grandsons are partners in the firm at present.

Edward Cecil, the first Lord Iveagh, spent much of his time in England, and his benefactions were divided between the two countries. In 1890 he founded the Guinness Trust to provide housing for working people in London and Dublin at a low rate of interest which, being retained for the trust's purposes, would by degrees enable further housing to be built. In 1903 the Dublin and London funds were divided, and the Dublin fund named the Iveagh Trust. At present the Guinness Trust houses 3,669 families, and the Iveagh Trust 945 families. Family tradition has it that the first Lord Iveagh maintained that public authorities should provide such housing, and that he would show both private investors and public authorities how it could be done. In Dublin he provided what is now called the Iveagh Hostel, a poor man's hotel on the lines of Rowton Houses in London (Lord Rowton was the first chairman of the Guinness Trust), and later on a play-centre for children, one of the first of its kind. He also laid out as a park the slum area north of St. Patrick's Cathedral, and built the Iveagh Market for the stall-holders displaced by the clearance. In England he endowed the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine and with Sir Ernest Cassel founded the Radium Institute, which is now amalgamated with the Mount Vernon Hospital.

In 1921 he founded the Chadacre Agricultural Institute at Hartest, near Bury St. Edmunds, to

provide training in agriculture for the sons of farm labourers, small-holders and small farmers in Suffolk and the adjoining counties. In 1925 he bought Ken Wood as a gallery for the more important part of his collection of pictures. This, together with the house and the surrounding land, have all passed by the terms of his will to the London County Council.

It is noteworthy that his benefactions were largely of a continuing kind, and planned so as to be self-supporting. Responsibility for their direction and that of the brewery was assumed on his death by his three sons, the eldest of whom, the present Lord Iveagh, is chairman of the brewery, Guinness Trust, Iveagh Trust and Chadacre. In his youth the present Earl was well known as winner of the Diamond Sculls in 1895 and 1896. He was one of the founders of the R.N.V.R. and was a Member of Parliament from 1908 until obliged to retire by his father's death in 1927. His brother, Ernest Guinness, who died in 1949, played a prominent part in the brewery and the trusts, as did his other brother, my father, in so far as his active political career permitted. As Walter Guinness he represented Bury St. Edmunds from 1907 to 1931. He was Financial Secretary to the Treasury from 1923 to 1924, and Minister of Agriculture from 1925 to 1929. He was chairman of the West Indies Royal Commission of 1938. In the first world war he won the D.S.O. with Bar, and in the second world war he met his death as Minister-Resident in the Middle East at the hands of assassins of the Stern gang.

Interest in the philanthropic enterprises of the first Lord Iveagh has been well maintained by his descendants. Six of his grandchildren and three great-grandsons are trustees of the Guinness and Iveagh Housing Trusts. Chadacre Agricultural Institute has upon its governing body two of his grand-children and a great-grandson. On the governing body of the Lister Institute he is still represented by his son and a great-grandson. The derelict area of the Breckland at Elveden in Suffolk, which he bought as a sporting estate, was turned into good agricultural land by the pioneering methods of his eldest son; and his Dublin house, 80 St. Stephen's Green, was in due course presented, also by his eldest son, to the Irish Government, who use it both to house the Department of External Affairs and as a centre for Government hospitality.

The brewery in Dublin was purchased in 1759 by the first Arthur Guinness. It is possible that the £100 each left to him and to his father by Archbishop Price helped them both to realize an ambition, and that they were not unmindful of the parable of the talents. Their venture has this year culminated in the bicentenary of a great industrial company with ramifications extending over four continents. Perhaps it is not too much to believe and to hope that the prosperity which has followed the fortunes of the company may in some part be due to the fact that for seven generations the family of Guinness have regarded it, not merely as a source of wealth but as a trust handed on to them by their forefathers.